

In The Claims:

43. (Currently Amended) A method of making a joint between a first and a second component using a fastener having a first end with an adjacent flange having a diameter greater than a first tubular barrel portion and a second end having a second tubular barrel portion merging into a shoulder of a flanged part having a greater diameter than said second tubular barrel portion, characterized by the following steps:

a) making a joint between said first end of said fastener and said first component by deforming said first tubular barrel portion radially outwardly thereby sandwiching said first component between said flange and said first tubular barrel portion;

b) introducing said second end of said fastener through a hole in said second component by applying said second component to said first component, whereby said shoulder of said flanged part abuts said second component spacing said second component from said first component;

c) fastening said fastener to said second component by deforming said second tubular barrel portion radially outwardly thereby sandwiching said second component between said shoulder and said second tubular barrel portion; and

d) optionally fixedly attaching said two components at one or more positions remote from the fastener device, with step d) being performable either before or after step c);

wherein step a) comprises ~~one of per-piercing said first component and~~ piercing said first component with said first end of said fastener.

44 to 46. (Canceled)

47. (Previously Presented) A method of making a joint between a first and second component using a fastener having a first end with an adjacent flange having a diameter greater than a first tubular barrel portion and a second end having a second tubular barrel portion merging into a shoulder of a flanged part having a greater diameter than said second barrel portion, characterized by the following steps:

a) making a joint between said first end of said fastener and said first component by deforming said first tubular barrel portion radially outwardly thereby sandwiching said first component between said flange and said first tubular barrel portion;

b) introducing said second end of said fastener through a hole in said second component by applying said second component to said first component, whereby said shoulder of said flanged part abuts said second component spacing said second component from said first component;

c) fastening said fastener to said second component by deforming said second tubular barrel portion radially outwardly thereby sandwiching said second component between said shoulder and said second tubular barrel portion; and

d) optionally fixedly attaching said two components at one or more positions remote from the fastener device, with step d) being performable either before or after step c) wherein said fastener includes a first element being attachable to said first component and a second element being insertable into the second component and adjoining said elements by one of inserting a fastener through said two elements and bolting a threaded shaft of one of said elements to the other of said elements.

48. (Previously Presented) A method of making a joint between a first and second component using a fastener having a first end with an adjacent flange having a diameter greater than a first tubular barrel portion and a second end having a second tubular barrel portion merging into a shoulder of a flanged part having a greater diameter than said second barrel portion, characterized by the following steps:

a) making a joint between said first end of said fastener and said first component by deforming said first tubular barrel portion radially outwardly thereby sandwiching said first component between said flange and said first tubular barrel portion;

b) introducing said second end of said fastener through a hole in said second component by applying said second component to said first component, whereby said shoulder of said flanged part abuts said second component spacing said second component from said first component;

c) fastening said fastener to said second component by deforming said second tubular barrel portion radially outwardly thereby sandwiching said second component between said shoulder and said second tubular barrel portion; and

d) optionally fixedly attaching said two components at one or more positions remote from the fastener device, with step d) being performable either before or after step c); and wherein step of providing said fastener includes providing a first element component as set forth in step a) and a second element joinable to the second component as set forth in steps b) and c) and a third element insertable between said first and second elements prior to performing step c).

49-51. (Canceled)

52. (Previously Presented) A method of supporting panel members in spaced relation and forming a panel assembly, comprising the following steps:

forming an opening in a first of said panel members, inserting a first end portion of a fastener element having an abutment into said panel member opening and clinching said first end of said fastener element to said one of said panel members by deforming a portion of said fastener element radially outwardly over said first of said panel members positioning said panel member between said abutment and said fastener element being deformed radially outwardly;

forming an opening in a second of said of said panel members, and overlaying said second of said panel members upon said first of said panel members thereby coaxially aligning said first opening in said first panel with said second opening in said second panel; inserting a second end of said fastener element having a second shoulder into said opening in said second of said panel members and clinching said second end of said fastener element to said second of said panel members by deforming a portion of said fastener element radially outwardly over said second of said panel members thereby pinching said panel member between said should and said panel member being deformed radially outwardly; wherein said method further includes piercing said opening in said first panel member with said first end of said fastener element.

53. (Currently Amended) The method of supporting panel members in spaced relation and forming a panel assembly as defined in claim 52, wherein said fastener element first and second end portions are tubular and said fastener element includes a radial flange portion adjacent to by spaced from said tubular end portions, said method including inserting said tubular end portions of said fastener element through said openings in said first and

second panel members and clinching said fastener member tubular end portions to said panel members by radially deforming said tubular end portions of said fastener element.

54. (Previously Presented) A method of supporting panel members in spaced relation and forming a panel assembly, comprising the following steps:

forming an opening in a first of said panel members, inserting a first end portion of a fastener element having an abutment into said panel member opening and clinching said first end of said fastener element to said one of said panel members by deforming a portion of said fastener element radially outwardly over said first of said panel members positioning said panel member between said abutment and said fastener element being deformed radially outwardly;

forming an opening in a second of said of said panel members, and overlying said second of said panel members upon said first of said panel members thereby coaxially aligning first opening in said first panel with said second opening in said second panel; inserting a second end of said fastener element having a second shoulder into said opening in said second of said panel members and clinching said second end of said fastener element to said second of said panel members by deforming a portion of said fastener element radially outwardly over said second of said panel members thereby pinching said panel member between said should and said panel member being deformed radially outwardly;

wherein said fastener element comprises a plurality of parts including a first female fastener element, a second female fastener element and tubular spacer element, said first female fastener element including said first end portion of said fastener element and said second female fastener element including said second end portion of said fastener element

and said female fastener elements having a bore therethrough, said method including the following steps:

inserting said first end portion of said first female fastener element in said opening in said one of said panel members and clinching said first end portion;

securing said tubular spacer element to said first female fastener element generally coaxially aligned with said bore through said first female fastener element;

inserting said second end portion of said second female element through said opening through said second of said panel members and clinching said second female fastener element to said second of said panel members; and

securing a second end of said tubular spacer member to said second female fastener element generally coaxially aligned with said bore through said second female fastener element.